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(54) **Scoop used in cooking and/or portioning food**

(57) The invention relates to a scoop (1) used in cooking and/or portioning food, comprising a plate-like, elongated handle (10) and a plate-like scoop blade (20) as its extension. The handle (10) is provided with at least one weakening line (11) in the longitudinal direction of the handle (10), which allows the handle (10) to be bent into a chute by pressing the handle (10). The scoop blade (20) is provided with two or more weakening lines (21, 22), which join the longitudinal weakening line (11) or

weakening lines of the handle (10) in such a way that the scoop blade (20) bends into a chute, cup, spoon or dish forced by the bending of the handle (10) into a chute. The weakening lines (11, 21) are formed of elastic material (13), which is more elastic than the scoop material. At the weakening lines there are slots (14) in the scoop material, which are filled up with the said elastic material (13).

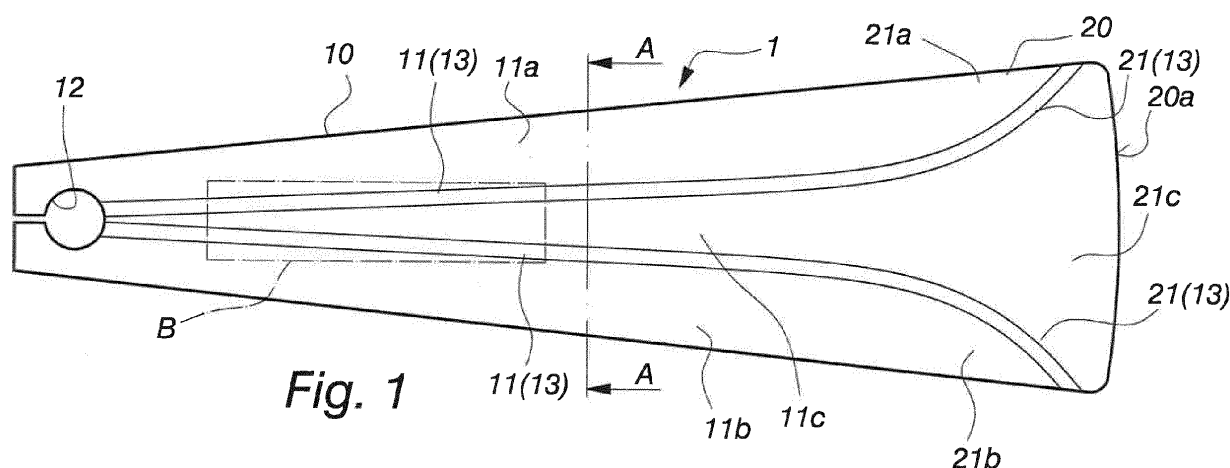


Fig. 1

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a scoop used in cooking and/or portioning food, comprising a plate-like, elongated handle and a plate-like scoop blade as its extension. The handle is provided with at least one weakening line in the longitudinal direction of the handle, which allows the handle to be bent into a chute by pressing the handle. The scoop blade is provided with two or more weakening lines, which join the longitudinal weakening line or weakening lines of the handle in such a way that the scoop blade is bent into a chute, cup, spoon or dish forced by the bending of the handle into a chute.

[0002] Previously are known scoops of this type which have traditionally been made of wood. They are typically utensils intended for cooking taking place by a stove and/or an oven, comprising a handle, a shaft usually as an extension of the handle or in conjunction with it, and a scoop part (scoop blade) as an extension of the shaft (or handle). Nowadays, also heat-resistant plastics, such as polyamide, are used as material instead of wood. They are suitable for use, for example, with so-called Teflon pans or the like and are also dishwasher-safe.

[0003] These types of scoops are mainly intended for use in connection with preparing food. Therefore, removing and portioning all of the food from the cooking dishes (for example, meat and pan juice from a frying pan or pasta/rice from a saucepan) is difficult with this type of a scoop. There are various utensils known as such for removing prepared food from a dish intended for cooking. These include, for example, a ladle, a pasta server and a spoon. Therefore, various utensils are often required for cooking and serving/portioning prepared food.

[0004] To avoid this disadvantage, from the publications EP 1 142 522 A1, GB 2 052 246 A, WO 90/14785 and US 1 521 768 are known scoops of the type mentioned at the beginning, by means of which the handling of food after preparation can also easily be carried out, thus facilitating and speeding up especially handling following cooking, such as portioning. In these known scoops, the weakening lines are implemented as thinning of the scoop's plate material. Since the scoop material must be made of relatively hard material, which is somewhat flexible but not very elastic, a disadvantage of these known scoops is that after several times of use, the scoop will no longer return to the almost planar shape, but remains in the bent shape resulting from pressing the handle. Therefore, the desired dual functioning as a scoop and a portioning means is not properly achieved. Furthermore, the weakening line may break in long-term use.

[0005] The aim of the present invention is to provide a utensil used in cooking, by means of which the disadvantages of the above-mentioned known scoops can be avoided.

[0006] To achieve the above aim, the present invention is characterised in that the weakening lines are formed of elastic material, which is more elastic than the scoop

material, that at the weakening lines there are slots in the scoop material, which separate the scoop material into plate parts which are joined together by thin necks of scoop material, that the slots are filled up with the said elastic material.

[0007] With this is achieved the aim of the invention, where in a single cooking utensil is combined the food preparation function and the food handling function following cooking, so that both functions can easily be carried out with the same utensil and that this property remains also in long-term use. The use of several utensils is thus avoided.

[0008] Preferred embodiments of the invention are disclosed in the dependent claims.

[0009] The invention is described in greater detail in the following, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a top view of a scoop according to a preferred embodiment of the invention when straight,

Figure 1A shows a section of Figure 1 along line A-A,

Figure 1B shows the scoop material without elastic material in sub-area B of Figure 1,

Figure 2 shows a side view of the scoop shown in Figure 1,

Figure 3 shows a top view of the scoop of Figures 1 and 2 when bent,

Figure 4 shows the scoop of Figure 3 from the side,

Figure 5 shows an axonometric view of a scoop bent according to Figures 3 and 4,

Figure 6 shows a top view of a second preferred embodiment of the scoop according to the invention when straight, and

Figure 7 shows a top view of a third preferred embodiment of the scoop according to the invention.

[0010] Figures 1 and 2 thus show a scoop according to the invention, which is marked with reference numeral 1. Here, the scoop 1 is made of a plate-like element, the material of which is preferably plastic, such as polyamide. The basic parts of the scoop 1 include a handle, marked with reference numeral 10, and a plate-like scoop blade provided as its extension, marked with reference numeral 20. In this case, the handle 10 is the narrow first end of the scoop 1, which widens as a sector towards the scoop blade 20. Furthermore, the scoop blade 20 is the second end, widening as a sector as a direct extension of the handle 10, which ends in the longitudinal direction of the

scoop, preferably in a curved or essentially straight edge or tip 20a. The scoop according to Figures 1 and 2 can be used, for example, as an ordinary spatula.

[0011] The handle 10 of the scoop 1 according to Figures 1 and 2 is provided with two weakening lines, marked with reference numeral 11, in the longitudinal direction of the handle 10. These weakening lines 11 continue in the scoop blade 20 area as weakening lines 21 curving towards the side edges of the scoop blade, which end in the side edges in the vicinity of the scoop blade tip 20a.

[0012] The handle 10 is thus divided into three adjacent plate parts 11a, 11c and 11b. The outermost plate parts 11a and 11b can be turned towards one another with respect to the hinge axes determined by the weakening lines 11, as shown in Figures 3 and 4. The handle 10 thus becomes chute-like. At the same time, the scoop blade 20 bends into a cup or dish as shown in Figures 3 and 4, forced by the bending of the handle 10 into a chute and allowed by the curved weakening lines 21 provided in the scoop blade. It is noted that in the scoop blade 20 are thus formed three planar bending segments 21a and 22a and 22b of the scoop blade 20, which are constituted by the plate surfaces bent into curved form, thus forming the above-mentioned cup or dish.

[0013] This embodiment is particularly advantageous for moving and portioning liquid foods (broths, sauces, etc.) directly from the dish intended for cooking.

[0014] The above-mentioned weakening lines 11 in the handle and the weakening lines 21 in the scoop blade are made of an elastic material 13, which is more elastic than the plate material. The elastic material is preferably silicone. Heat-resistant thermoelastomers and rubber compounds may also be used. At the weakening lines in the scoop material are slots 14 which divide the scoop material into plate parts 11a, 11b, 11c in the area of the handle and into plate parts 21a, 21b, 21c in the scoop blade area. The plate parts of the handle 10 continue solidly as plate parts of the scoop blade. These three adjacent plate parts are connected to one another by means of thin necks 15 of scoop material, the purpose of which is only to keep the plate parts attached to one another during manufacture. The necks 15 are thus short necks at distances from one another, which are thinner than the thickness of the scoop material. In the finished scoop, the necks 15 may break, because the elastic material binds the plate parts to one another. The slots 14 are filled up with the said elastic material 13 which attaches to the edges of the slots 14 and binds the plate parts into a uniform scoop. At the edges of the slots 14 are gripping formations 16 for attaching the elastic material to the scoop material. These gripping formations may be surface roughenings or preferably constitute a form lock between the scoop material and the elastic material.

[0015] The width of the slots is preferably more than 1.5 mm in order to give good elasticity and strength to the weakening lines. The two weakening lines in the han-

dle (as opposed to one) reduce the force required to press the scoop into a chute. Thus also the stress exerted on the weakening lines diminishes and strength increases.

[0016] The thickness of the scoop material becomes thinner when moving from the handle 10 area to the scoop blade 20 area. In the scoop blade area, the elastic material 13 is preferably made as thick as the scoop material. In the handle area, the elastic material is thinner than the scoop material, whereupon grooves are formed at the weakening lines 11 on the underside of the scoop 1 (Fig. 1A). The elastic material of the weakening lines thus acts as membrane hinges, by means of which the different parts 11a, 11b, 11c (in the handle), 21a, 21b and 21c (in the scoop blade) of the scoop 1 turn with respect to one another and enable the scoop 1 to bend into the position shown in Figures 3 and 4. On the top side of the scoop, the elastic material and the harder scoop material are on the same level, in which case no grooves are formed on the top surface of the handle or on either surface of the scoop blade.

[0017] In addition to the elastic material of the weakening lines, the scoop material may be of a somewhat resilient substance, whereby the scoop 1 bent in accordance with Figures 3 and 4 will return by spring action to the straightened position shown in Figures 1 and 2.

[0018] The first end of the scoop 1 is provided with a hole 12 or other means by which the scoop can be placed to hang for storage, for example, on a storage hook mounted on the wall.

[0019] Figure 6 shows a second preferred embodiment of the invention. In it, the handle 10 comprises two weakening lines 11 which distance from one another as a sector towards the scoop blade 20, extending in straight form across the scoop blade 20. These two weakening lines 11 thus divide the scoop 1 into the two bending parts 11a and 11b and in addition to a centre part 11c which remains between them. The scoop blade will then also bend into a chute like the handle 10. The parts of the scoop blade 20 extending from the bending parts 11a and 11b are formed into successive fork-like projections 23 or teeth. The projections 23 preferably extend transversely to the longitudinal direction of the adjacent weakening lines 11. In addition to functioning as a mixer and a scoop during the preparation of pasta (for example, spaghetti) or noodles, when bent in accordance with the invention, the scoop 1 according to this embodiment also functions as a server for removing them from the boiling water or for portioning them. Excess liquid (boiling water) can be drained through a hole 23a made in the centre part 11c. The hole 23a is preferably made in the scoop blade 20 area.

[0020] Figure 7 further shows a third preferred embodiment of the invention. Also in this case, the handle 10 comprises two weakening lines 11 which distance from one another as a sector towards the scoop blade 20, extending in straight form across the scoop blade 20. These two weakening lines 11 thus divide the scoop 1 into two bending parts 11a and 11b and in addition into

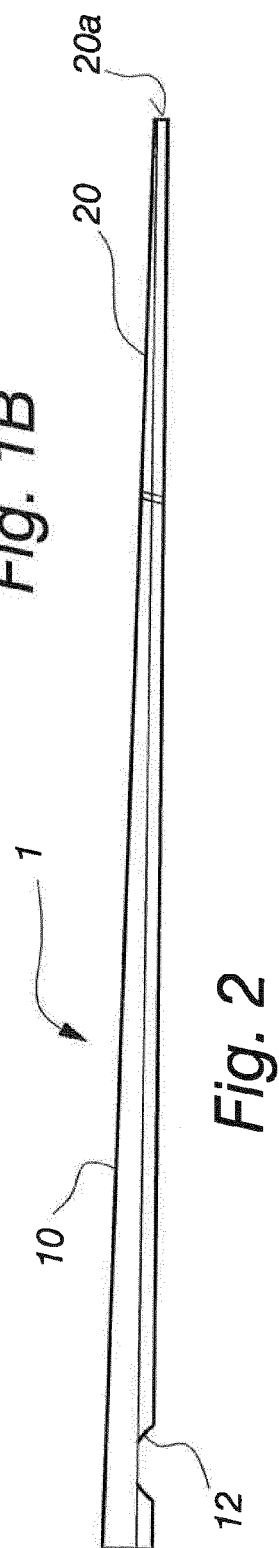
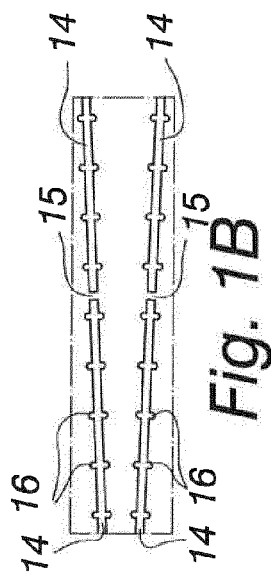
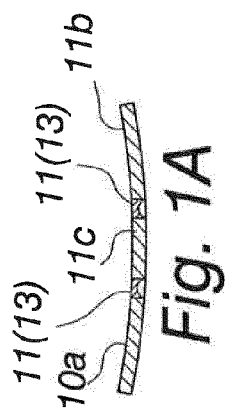
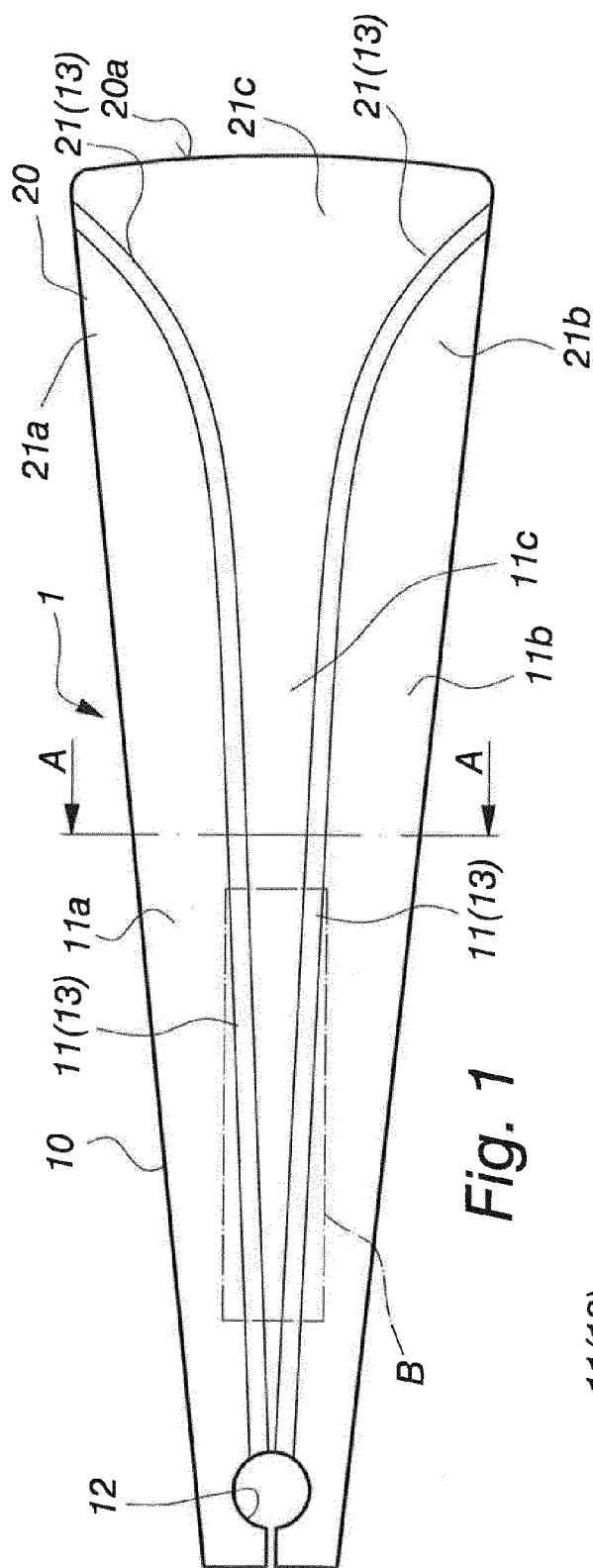
a centre part 11c which remains between them. The scoop blade 20 will then also bend into a chute. In this embodiment, in the centre part 11c of the scoop, within the scoop blade area 20, is made a plurality of openings 24, which are in this case elongated and made directly in the centre part 11c. The openings may also be of a different shape, for example, round or square, and their number may be optional. The openings 24 may also be arranged so densely that they form a meshy perforated surface in the scoop blade 20 area. The scoop 1 shown in Figure 7 is also suitable as a server, especially for rice and other processed foods of structurally similar size, such as couscous grains. The size of the holes 24 is selected in such a way that processed foods of the size of rice and couscous grains will not fall from the bent scoop 1, but excess boiling water will drain off through them. Furthermore, the bending parts 11a and 11b bent in accordance with Figures 3 and 4 prevent the processed food from falling off the edges, which facilitates and speeds up the portioning of such processed foods.

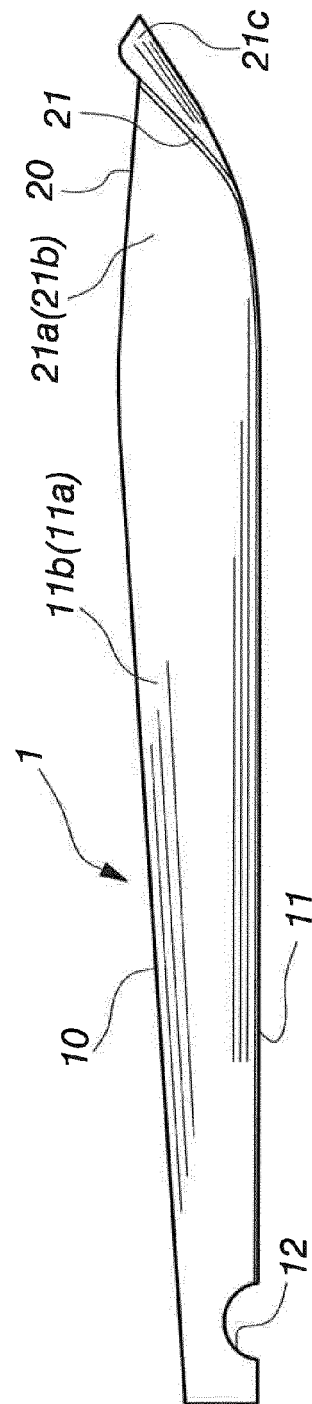
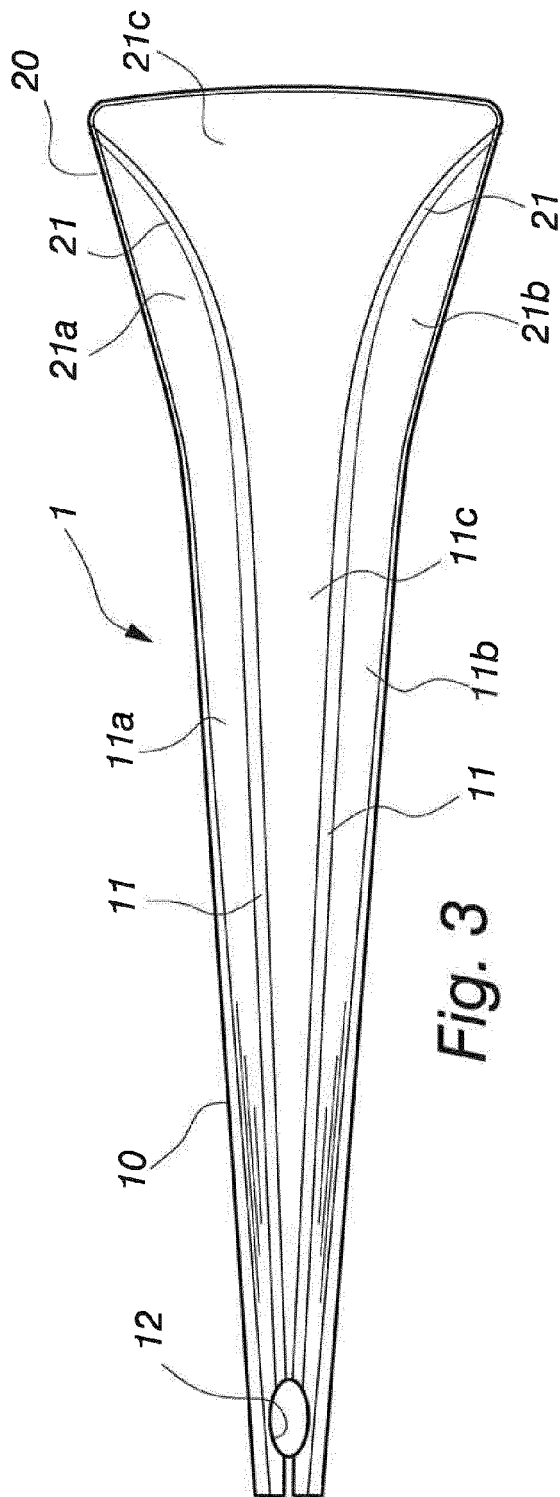
[0021] In the embodiments of Figures 6 and 7, the weakening lines are made of elastic material 13 in the manner described in connection with Figures 1 and 2.

[0022] The present invention is not limited to the embodiments disclosed, but may be applied in many ways within the scope of protection of the appended claims.

Claims

1. A scoop (1) used in cooking and/or portioning food, comprising a plate-like, elongated handle (10) and a plate-like scoop blade (20) as its extension, the handle (10) being provided with at least one weakening line (11) in the longitudinal direction of the handle (10), which allows the handle (10) to be bent into a chute by pressing the handle (10), and the scoop blade (20) being provided with two or more weakening lines (11), which join the longitudinal weakening line (11) or weakening lines of the handle (10) in such a way that the scoop blade (20) bends into a chute, cup, spoon or dish forced by the bending of the handle (10) into a chute, **characterised in that** the weakening lines (11, 21) are formed of elastic material (13), which is more elastic than the scoop material, that at the weakening lines there are slots (14) in the scoop material, which separate the scoop material into plate parts (11a, 11b, 11c, 21a, 21b, 21c) which are joined together by thin necks (15) of scoop material, and that the slots (14) are filled up with the said elastic material (13).
2. A scoop as claimed in claim 1, **characterised in that** at the edges of the slots are gripping formations (16) for attaching the elastic material to the scoop material.
3. A scoop as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterised in that** in the handle (10) area are two adjacent weakening lines (11), which distance from one another towards the scoop blade (20), and which continue as weakening lines (21) extending across the scoop blade (20).
4. A scoop as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, **characterised in that** the elastic material is silicone.
5. A scoop (1) as claimed in any of the above claims 1 to 4, **characterised in that** the handle (10) and the scoop blade (20) are of the same plate material which is divided by the slots (14) in the weakening lines into three plate parts (11a, 11b, 11c, 21a, 21b, 21c) which are connected to one another by elastic material (13) which fills the slots.
6. A scoop as claimed in claim 3, **characterised in that** in the scoop blade area, the weakening lines (21) curve towards the side edges of the scoop blade and end in the side edges of the scoop blade in the vicinity of the scoop blade tip (20a).
7. A scoop as claimed in any of the above claims 2 to 6, **characterised in that** the gripping formations (16) constitute a form lock between the scoop material and the elastic material.





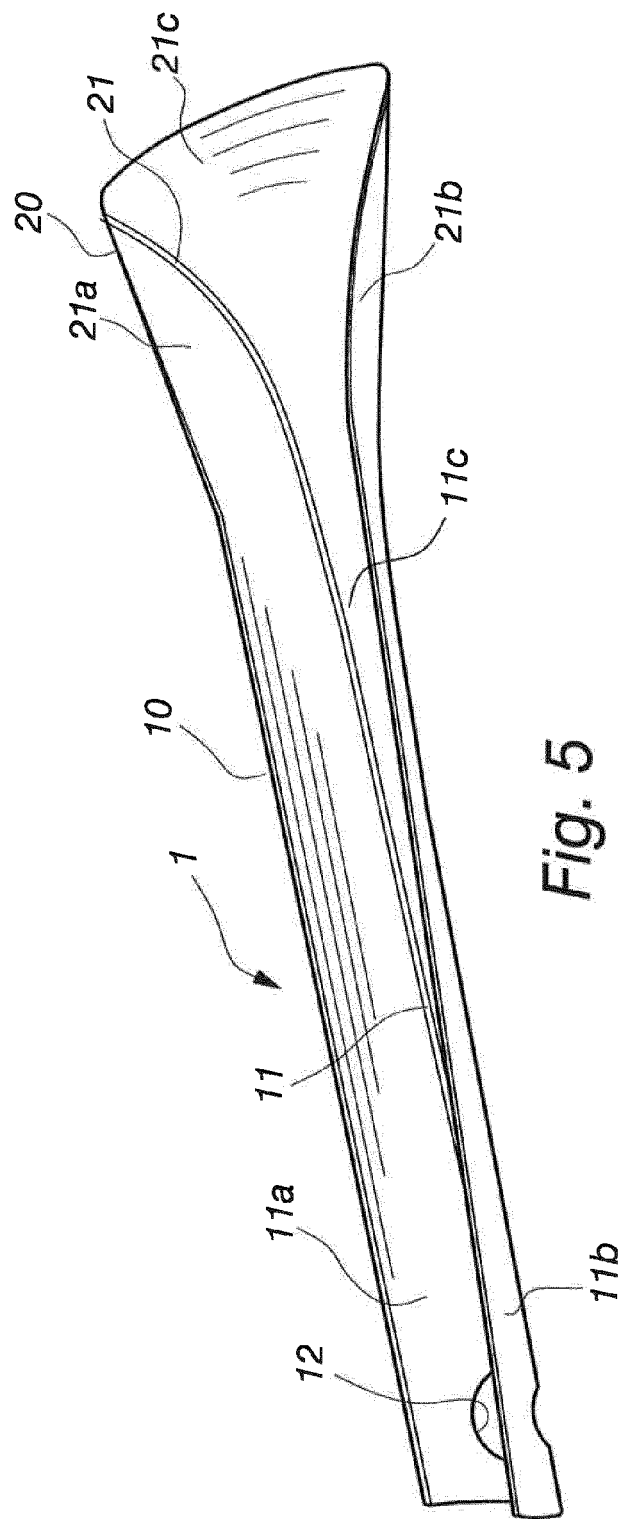
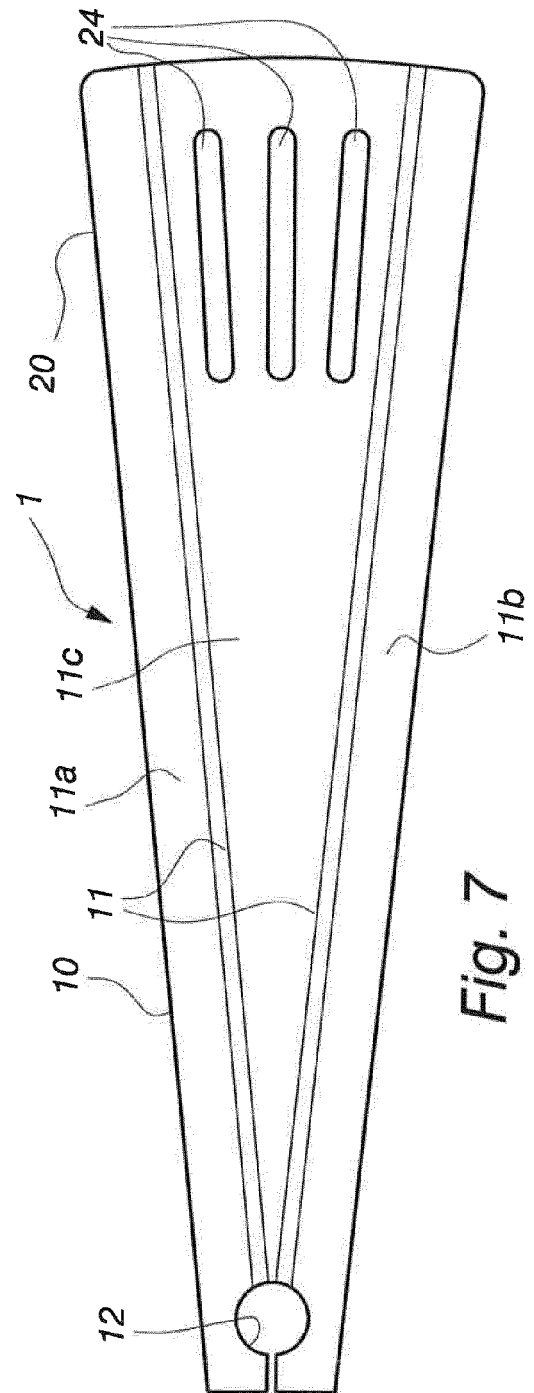
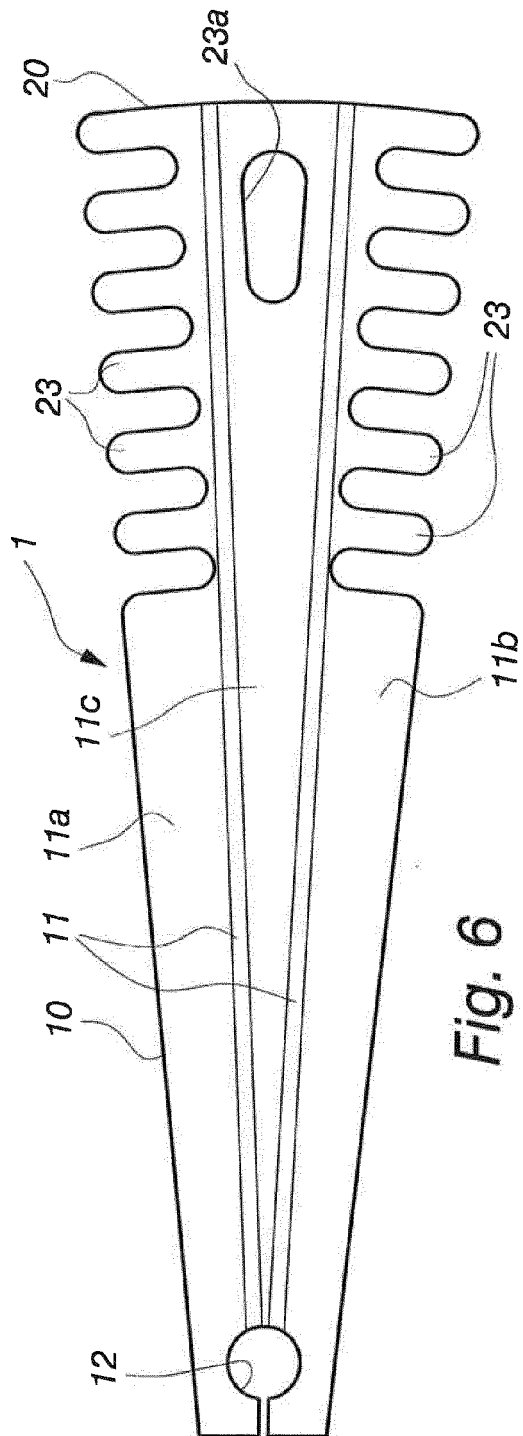


Fig. 5





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EP 13 15 0816

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
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Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague		19 July 2013	Vistisen, Lars
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82

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